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Marines recall embassy guards from Moscow

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The entire U.S. Marine security guard contingent in Moscow has been recalled to the United States amid reports that other Marines are suspects in the Soviet KGB's penetration of the U.S. Embassy there.

Two Marines are under arrest in the investigation.

"This measure is precautionary in nature and is intended to facilitate an investigation of the security program at the U.S. Embassy," said Phyllis Oakley, a State Department spokeswoman. "There's no evidence that any of the returning Marines are implicated in any wrongdoing."

But administration sources familiar with the case said that U.S. investigators suspect other Marines may also have been involved in illicit activities in Moscow.

Meanwhile, Sgt. Clayton J. Lonetree, who is under arrest on charges of spying for Moscow, was admitted to Bethesda Naval

Hospital for psychiatric tests, the Marine Corps said yesterday.

A civilian attorney for Sgt. Lonetree said the tests were ordered after the Marine guard made contradictory statements to Naval Investigative Service agents probing the case.

The withdrawal of all 28 Marine guards at the Moscow embassy, to take place next month, came after the Marine Corps disclosed last week that Sgt. Lonetree and a second Marine, Cpl. Arnold Bracy, conspired to allow Soviet KGB agents to enter secured areas of the embassy between January and March 1986. The two men allowed the Soviets to "peruse" the embassy's communications center, defense attache office and other sensitive intelligence areas, the Marine Corps said in documents filed in military court.

Other Marine security guards, considered the elite of the corps, will be brought in from other U.S. embassies or from the

Marine base at Quantico, Va., the Marine Corps and State Department said in a joint statement.

Administration officials familiar with the case have said it represents one of the most serious intelligence failures in U.S. history.

The 28 Marine guards in Moscow are coming home at the same time the State Department has launched a review of embassy security procedures, and the Pentagon is investigating whether there should be changes in the selection, training and assignment of Marine security guards at U.S. embassies.

The Moscow embassy is not the only place where Marine guards have caused security problems, according to administration sources. One source said the top-secret National Security Agency abandoned the use of Marine security guards at its facilities during the late 1970s because of security problems. NSA now employs its own police force.

The Marine Corps said Sgt. Lonetree, 25, was admitted to Bethesda Naval Hospital for a psychiatric examination to determine whether he is competent for court-martial. He has been held since December in solitary confinement at the Marine base in Quantico.

A Marine Corps spokesman denied Sgt. Lonetree had tried to commit suicide and said Sgt. Lonetree was at the hospital for "an inquiry into the mental capacity or responsibility of the accused."

An administration source said that Sgt. Lonetree showed signs of

"delusions of grandeur and paranoia," which cast doubt on some of the statements he made to NIS investigators.

Michael V. Stuhff, Sgt. Lonetree's attorney, said in a telephone interview that the Marine Corps contended during a military court proceeding last week that Sgt. Lonetree

falsely told investigators that he stole classified documents and kept them hidden in an embassy drainpipe.

Mr. Stuhff said the NIS agents told Marine Corps judicial authorities, "No such documents exist, nor did they come up missing, and the place he described was not accessible to him."

According to Mr. Stuhff, one of the agents conducting the interrogation sessions with Sgt. Lonetree "turned off the tape recorder and said, 'Just tell us anything, tell us a lie.'"

In a further development, lawyers for Sgt. Lonetree charged that Cpl. Bracy, a second Marine guard suspected of spying, has recanted previous statements made to investigators that the two guards gave KGB agents access to the U.S. Embassy.

According to Mr. Stuhff, "Sgt. Lonetree was absolutely shocked that Bracy would make something like that up."

Marine Corps officials have declined to comment on Cpl. Bracy's statements in the case since they are "part of the investigative process," a spokesman said.

Mr. Stuhff said he has not spoken with Cpl. Bracy nor viewed transcripts of statements he made to investigators. But he said Cpl. Bracy lied to investigators during "several weeks" of questioning. Cpl. Bracy's statements and his recantation are

unavailable, he said, since they are classified.

"He [Cpl. Bracy] became convinced that Lonetree was guilty, but, in any event, neither he nor Lonetree have been involved in any espionage," Mr. Stuhff said.

Both Marines were coerced into making false admissions by NIS investigators, Mr. Stuhff claimed.

"It indicates the extent to which these young men have had self-sacrifice drummed into them," he said.

The New York Times, citing documents obtained from defense attorneys, reported yesterday that Sgt. Lonetree said he spied for the Soviets because of "what the white man did to the Indian." Sgt. Lonetree is a member of the Navajo and Winnebago American Indian tribes.

Mr. Stuhff provided some details of the Lonetree case, which he claimed was not a "classic honey trap," a reference to intelligence operations involving sexual entrapment.

Sgt. Lonetree, he said, became romantically involved with a Soviet national, Violetta Seina, who was employed as a translator by the U.S.

Embassy. Mr. Stuhff described her as a Ukrainian Jew who had good English-language skills and had been invited to embassy parties despite Marine regulations barring fraternization with foreign women.

"Frankly, she does not appear to be a Soviet agent," Mr. Stuhff said. "She's a Soviet national and Soviet agents may have tried to put pressure on her" to exploit her relationship with Sgt. Lonetree.

Mr. Stuhff said Sgt. Lonetree had hoped to pursue a career in intelligence after his tour of duty in Mos-

cow and at one point in the affair attempted to blackmail a Soviet KGB agent he had been in contact with.

"He's a young idealistic man who was trying to take some initiative and be a hero, but he got out on a limb," Mr. Stuhff said. "The circumstances make him look real bad."

Mr. Stuhff said Sgt. Lonetree, after he had been transferred to the U.S. Embassy in Vienna, "walked into the CIA station . . . and said, 'I've got this going on and I'm in over my head'."

The next military hearing in the case is scheduled for April 15, he said.

Both Sgt. Lonetree and Cpl. Bracy were seduced by Soviet nationals employed at the U.S. Embassy, administration officials said.

Sgt. Lonetree has been charged with 24 counts, including two espionage charges. If convicted, he could be executed.

He is accused of revealing the names and identities of covert U.S. agents, providing Soviet agents with floor plans and office assignments for the U.S. embassies in Moscow and Vienna and with allowing Soviet personnel to enter secured areas of the Moscow embassy.

Cpl. Bracy was transferred last week to Quantico, where he is being held on suspicion of espionage. He has not been charged formally pending the outcome of a preliminary investigation.

Marine Corps spokesman Maj. Anthony Rothfork said that Cpl. Bracy was demoted from sergeant last summer under a Marine Corps administrative procedure. He declined to elaborate, citing privacy restrictions.